

Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-09 H-02 INR-09 L-03

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E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PARM, JA

SUBJECT: DIET DEBATE OF CONSTITUTIONALITY OF DEFENSIVE
NUCLEAR WEAPONS

SUMMARY: PRIMIN TANAKA STATEMENT IN DIET MARCH 13
TEMPORARILY FORECLOSED BASIS FOR JAPANESE OPTION WITH
RESPECT TO POSSESSION OF TACTICAL (DEFENSIVE) NUCLEAR
WEAPONS. HOWEVER, TRADITIONAL LINE WAS REINSTATED
NEXT DAY BY PRESENTATION OF GOJ QTE UNIFIED VIEW UNQTE
CONSISTENT WITH POSITION TAKEN BY SUCCESSIVE CABINETS
SINCE PRIMIN KISHI. AT SAME TIME GOJ ALSO REAFFIRMED
SUPPORT OF THREE NON- NUCLEAR PRINCIPLES. AS RESULT, LDP
CRITICISM OF PRIMIN' S INEPT HANDLING OF INTERPELLATIONS
IN DIET INCREASED, AND OPPOSITION PARTIES WERE
PROVIDED WITH NEW ISSUE TO EXPLOIT IN DELAYING DIET
PROCEEDINGS. END SUMMARY.

1. PRIMIN TANAKA, RESPONDING TO QUESTION BY
EIICHI NAGASUE (DSP) IN LOWER HOUSE BUDGET COMMITTEE
INTERPELLATIONS MARCH 13, SAID QTE NUCLEAR WEAPONS ARE
OFFENSIVE, AND UNCONSTITUTIONAL UNQTE, THUS BASICALLY
CHANGING POSITION CONSISTENTLY MAINTAINED BY SUCCESSIVE
KISHI, IKEDA AND SATO CABINETS SINCE LATE 1950 S, I. E.
THAT QTE STRATEGIC NUCLEAR WEAPONS ARE OFFENSIVE IN
CHARACTER AND TACTICAL NUCLEAR WEAPONS ARE DEFENSIVE
UNQTE, AND THAT QTE DEFENSIVE NUCLEAR WEAPONS ARE
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CONSTITUTIONAL UNQTE.

2. NEXT DAY, IN EXPECTATION THAT OPPOSITION PARTIES WOULD EXPLOIT THIS INCONSISTENCY, DEFENSE AGENCY AND CABINET LEGISLATIVE BUREAU PRESENTED GOJ UNIFIED VIEW CONSISTENT WITH AND AFFIRMING LONG- STANDING CONSTITUTIONAL INTERPRETERATION. ESSENCE OF UNIFIED VIEW WAS:

- (1) THAT PRIMIN STATEMENT PREVIOUS DAY DID NOT ALTER GOJ UNIFIED VIEW ON POSSESSION OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS,
- (2) THAT NUCLEAR WEAPONS IN GENERAL ARE OFFENSIVE IN CHARACTER AND THAT JAPAN WOULD NOT POSSESS THEM, AND
- (3) THAT CONSTITUTION, NOTWITHSTANDING ABOVE, DOES NOT PROHIBIT POSSESSION OF MALL PURELY DEFENSIVE NUCLEAR WEAPONS WHICH DO NOT THREATEN OTHER NATIONS.

3. LATER, IN RESPONSE TO QUESTION BY TETSUYA TABUCHI (DSP) IN UPPER HOUSE BUDGET COMMITTEE INTERPELLATIONS MARCH 20, CABINET LEGISLATIVE BUREAU DIRECTOR ICHIRO YOSHIKUNI AND DEFENSE AGENCY DEFENSE BUREAU DIRECTOR TAKUYA KUBO BOTH STATED VIEW THAT NUCLEAR LAND MINES, AND NUCLEAR WARHEADS FOR 155 MM HOWITZERS AND SAM WOULD BE EXAMPLES OF PURELY DEFENSIVE NUCLEAR WEAPONS. KUBO ALSO EXPLAINED THAT STANDARD FOR JUDGMENT WHETHER NUCLEAR WEAPONS ARE OFFENSIVE OR DEFENSIVE SHOULD BE RANGE, NOT YIELD OF EXPLOSION. THIS MARKED FIRST DESCRIPTION BY HIGH GOJ OFFICIALS OF THE OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS THEY BELIEVE TO BE CONSTITUTIONAL.

4. IN SAME COMMITTEE, PRIMIN TANAKA RESTATED GOJ UNIFIED VIEW THAT CONSTITUTION DOES NOT TOTALLY BAN ALL

NUCLEAR WEAPONS, OUT ALSO REAFFIRMED HIS GOVERNMENT'S SUPPORT OF THREE NON- NUCLEAR PRINCIPLES (NON- PRODUCTION, NON- POSSESSION, NON- INTRODUCTION.)

5. ORIGINAL DIET EXCHANGES MARCH 13 AND 14 WERE REPORTED ONLY BY YOMIURI (BOTH VERNACULAR AND ENGLISH) ON MARCH 15.

6. COMMENT: WHILE IT UNCLEAR WHAT PRIMIN TANAKA MAY HAVE HAD IN MIND IN MAKING ORIGINAL RESPONSE MARCH 13, CONFIDENTIAL

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IT OBVIOUS THAT STATEMENT, IF ALLOWED TO STAND, WOULD HAVE REPRESENTED MAJOR POLICY CHANGE FORECLOSING THEORETICAL BASIS FOR JAPAN'S OPTION TO POSSESS TACTICAL

(DEFENSIVE) NUCLEAR WEAPONS LONG PRESERVED BY SUCCESSIVE GOVERNMENTS. WITHIN RIGHT WING OF LDP, STATEMENT HAS BEEN CRITICIZED AS YET ANOTHER EXAMPLE OF INEPT HANDLING OF INTERPELLATIONS AND FOR PROVIDING GOLDEN OPPORTUNITY FOR OPPOSITION PARTIES TO DELAY DIET DELIBERATIONS STILL FURTHER. OPPOSITION PARTIES THEMSELVES ARE REPORTEDLY SPLIT ON BEST MEANS TO EXPLOIT STATEMENT. DSP WAS WILLING AT FIRST TO LET RESPONSE STAND WITHOUT FURTHER QUESTION RATHER THAN AFFORD GOJ OPPORTUNITY TO MAKE REVISION. HOWEVER, JSP AND KOMEITO KEPT ISSUE ALIVE, AND ALL OPPOSITION PARTIES NOW GIVE EVERY EVIDENCE OF CONTINUING TO RAISE ISSUE AT EVERY OPPORTUNITY.
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